September/October, 1978

Lasca leaves

Los Angeles County Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens

Rotunda Mural

A NEW MURAL was added to the rotunda at the Arboretum entryway last May, the work of two dedicated members of Las Voluntarias, Grace Robinson and Ruth Brankey. Depicting a westerly view of Lasca Lagoon, the mural fills the east wall in the area and provides esthetic balance to an existing mural by the same two ladies.

Like their first work, the new mural is made entirely from natural materials gathered from the grounds of the Arboretum. These include bark of the eucalyptus and melaleuca, bamboo strips, carob and paulownia pods, leaves of the brachychiton and harpullia, fruit of the liquidambar, cupressus and oak, and flower parts of the magnolia. An exception was the material used to create the sky. "We had tried all kinds of things," said Mrs. Robinson, "even rice with blueing, but this became infected with insects. I called Ruth one evening and told her 'I think I have the answer to our sky problem.' She said, 'I think I have, too. What's yours?' We both had thought of the same thing: corn husks. It's what we used for the sky on both murals."

Their latest effort is tailor-made to the space that needed to be filled: five-and-a-half feet by twelve feet. Work began by laying out the scene on a piece of butcher paper cut to scale, the scene itself based on a section of a photograph of the lagoon much admired by department director Francis Ching. The paper sketch was carbon-copied onto the final three-quarter-inch plywood board that later was framed with redwood. They worked in a small

New 5½-by 10-foot mural in the Arboretum rotunda.

Photo by William Aplin

area in one of the headhouses just north of the research building and kept a careful record of their time. From start to finish the job took a thousand three-and-a-half hours, or, looking at it from the perspective of the standard 40-hour work week, a little over twenty-five weeks. Asked if they had had any serious differences in that time, they said they hadn't. "Neither of us was so confident that we felt we could insist on our own idea," said Mrs. Brankey. "We just discussed design ideas as we went along. Besides, I can't imagine anyone easier to work with than Grace."

Initial impressions, whether of botanic gardens, hotels, or entire cities, tend to result in judgments that, accurate or not, remain with the viewer. Visitors entering the Arboretum these days get a most favorable impression from what they see in the rotunda – the orchid display, history display, a huge map of the grounds with cuttings of plants in bloom underneath, and the two murals, usually the first objects to be photographed.

Grace Robinson and Ruth Brankey take justifiable pride in their contribution which they invariably describe as "a labor of love." The murals are their major but not only contribution to the Arboretum and the California Arboretum Foundation, which they have been members of for approximately ten years. Grace served three years as a history docent, and both she and Ruth continue to make items for the Foundation gift shop. They are artist-craftsmen who have made a tangible impression on the Arboretum, one that has earned them the appreciation of all who see their work and recognition by, for one, the Office of the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools, which engaged them to present a workshop for teachers in Long Beach under a program called "Multiculture through the Arts."

Ruth Brankey, left, and Grace Robinson worked the equivalent of 25 weeks to complete rotunda mural. One of the many problems was finding the right glue. They used white glue for the leaves, plastic glue for heavier pieces, and here and there a few nails.

Photo by William Aplin

The Australian section, featured on "Eucalyptus Day" at the Spring Extravaganza, is the largest single geographic area represented at the Arboretum. It contains a high percentage of the trees and shrubs native to that continent.

Photo by William Aplin

Spring Extravaganza V

THE ANNUAL Spring Extravaganza at the Arboretum, two horticultural field days designed for those who take their horticultural pursuits seriously, has become a staple among Arboretum events. Above all an educational event, it attracts a regular crowd of home gardeners who each year come to look in on its various parts. Attendance at the Extravaganza held last June 10th and 11th was 10,316.

Many people were drawn to the event by the plant clinics that were staffed by horticultural experts. Here, free of charge, they could have their questions answered, their plants identified, or they could have them diagnosed for disease or simply for the cause of poor appearance.

A new feature was the twice-daily tours of the Australian section led by staff biologists Leonid Enari and Gary Cromwell. The purpose was to acquaint more people with the landscaping potential of plants in the eucalyptus genus and, also, to explain how easy they are to grow. Many were surprised to learn that the genus contains over 500 species and also, that the Arboretum collection contains about a third of that number. Also, that apart from the 175-foot blue gums which they were accustomed to seeing along California highways and encircling farms where they served as windbreaks, there are quite a few relatively low-growing species. In this latter category, the favorites were the rose eucalyptus (*E. rhodantha*) and several mallees (*E. erythronema; E. macrocarpa; E. tetraptera*). As the above picture attests, the subject engaged the attention of many.

CAF Anniversary Meeting

THE 30th ANNUAL MEETING of the California Arboretum Foundation held last June 20 more than fulfilled all the planning that went into it. First on a pleasantly warm evening came the guided tours, starting at five o'clock, then a buffet dinner followed by an unusual fashion show, and then a business session that wasted no time in covering the various matters on the agenda.

The show presented a review of women's fashions over the approximately fifty-year period during which E. J. "Lucky" Baldwin and his daughter, Anita, made their imprint on the Arboretum land and the city of Arcadia. It was staged by the history docents of Las Voluntarias under the leadership of Jean Atkinson, Margaret Page, and Jennifer Harrell. CAF members and their guests saw some thirty-odd costumes of the past that included just about everything from feather boas and straw hats to tight-waisted floor-length skirts and highneck evening gowns.

Ruth Mary Larson, Foundation president and past president of Las Voluntarias, opened the business meeting with a review of the year's accomplishments. These included several substantial donations to the Arboretum by the Foundation: a new tram, a new, motorized nursery cart, a greenhouse, and two greenhouse coolers. The Herb Society gave funds for new paths constructed with Palos Verdes rock.

Joan Malafronte, current Las Voluntarias president, reported that the volunteers had donated over 45,000 hours of service and had raised $65,000 through the Baldwin Bonanza for the projected Hall of Environmental Education. She noted that the group had provided tours of the Arboretum for 15,000 school children during the year and that it now had 259 active members.

Elections for the board of trustees resulted in third terms for Ruth Mary Larson, James Currie, and Alice Coulombe; second terms for Walter Schoenfeld, William Stitt, and Dave Paradis; and first terms for Morgan Evans and Dick Ray.

A highlight of the meeting were the honorary memberships given to three longtime Foundation members for outstanding service to the Arboretum. They were Hilda Sademan, former Foundation membership secretary; Emma Menninger, Arboretum patron; and Ernest Hetherington, past president of the Foundation board of trustees.

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Fiesta de Flores

THE FOCUS of the 16th annual Fiesta de Flores at South Coast Botanic Garden held last May 20-21, was the sale of plants, and in this respect it was a great success.

The SCBG Foundation, which has staged the event every year since its inception, announced that its benefit fund for the garden had been enriched by close to 15 thousand dollars.

Much credit for the success of the sale is due Randy Bynum, Fiesta chairman, who did a superb job of planning and coordinating the event. His co-chairmen, Patty Rubio and Cindy Peters, were responsible for gathering up the several thousand plants that were sold, a fine collection that ranged from such standard items as pelargoniums, gesneriads, and begonias, to rare exotics from Africa and Southeast Asia.

But the sale was not the only attraction. Foundation members Dorothy Barnes, Vera Black and Suzy Seamans put together a varied assortment of craft items for the gift shop; Mary Harrison supervised the Fiesta raffle which offered many outstanding and expensive prizes; plant lecturer Joe Littlefield and bonsai artist-teacher Ben Suzuki demonstrated their specialties, and Pat and Jack Hughes showed visitors

A preview party for Foundation members and their guests was held the evening before the opening. Coordinated by Jan Kellog and Tim and Janet Foley, it had a Japanese theme, exemplified by the food and the gracious ladies from the community's Japanese Cultural Center who served it.

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Weather

THE 1977-1978 WINTER SEASON included most of the possible weather extremes. It was the warmest since 1922; there were three days in March with temperatures over 90 degrees. Though the drought was not the worst in the history of southern California, it was serious enough to bring about all kinds of restrictions on the use of water, especially in the northern part of the state where the drought was more severe.

Then, in mid-December it started to rain, and by the time the month was over 6.38 inches had fallen. The total for January was 7.70 inches, for February 10.14 inches, and for March 11.54 inches. By the second week of April, over 37 inches had been recorded for the 1977-1978 weather season with four, mostly dry months to go. By comparison, the 1976-1977 season had 14.65 inches, the 1975-76 season 15.9 inches. The average rainfall at the Arboretum over a 25-year period is 18.01 inches.

By the end of February, most of California had become pretty well waterlogged. As the rains continued, the ground became more and more soggy. By March, the ground could no longer hold trees against strong winds which toppled 50 trees at the Arboretum, 24 at Descanso Gardens, and 54 at South Coast Botanic Garden. But there is the bright side. The drought ended and everyone is now benefitting from higher water tables and filled rivers, lakes, and reservoirs. At the Arboretum, Descanso, and South Coast, plants leafed out with new vigor, ready to stand the long dry season now ending.

(*LASCA continues after page* 36)

CINNAMON

The Oldest of all Spices

Leonid Enari

CINNAMON WAS ONE of the commodities Egyptian treasure-hunting expeditions brought back from the Land of Punt for their queen, Hatshepsut, around 1600 B.C. The Land of Punt is believed to have been the region on both sides of the lower Red Sea and the Gulf of Aden. It not only supplied Egyptians with cinnamon, it also was the source of myrrh, incense, ivory, ebony, eye cosmetics, silks, panther skins, monkeys, baboons, and dogs.

Inasmuch as true cinnamon does not grow in Punt, nor in any other part of Africa, it is reasonable to assume it was brought into the area by a spice-dealing people. Just who these people were is not known.

The southwest corner of Arabia, known to ancient writers as Arabia Felix, seems always to have been the most progressive part of the peninsula. Its people were intelligent and adventuresome. They were sailors and traders from earliest times, and there seems no doubt they were the first to establish contacts with eastern spice lands and the first to bring cinnamon to the Middle East markets.

Cinnamon was imported and distributed exclusively by the Arabs for centuries. To protect their business interests and to discourage competition, they fabricated and spread stories on the dangers and difficulties in collecting cinnamon. They said that in the country where cinnamon grows, great birds break the branches of the cinnamon trees and carry them away to make nests. The branches are fastened with mud to a sheer rock where no man is able to climb. To get the cinnamon, the Arabs said they had to cut all the oxen and beasts of burden that died in their land into large pieces and carry them into the nesting areas of the birds. When they would withdraw from the area, the birds, swooping down, would seize the pieces of meat and fly up to their nests which, not being able to support the added weight, would break off and fall to the ground. After this, the Arabs would return and collect the cinnamon bark, which they then would sell to other countries.

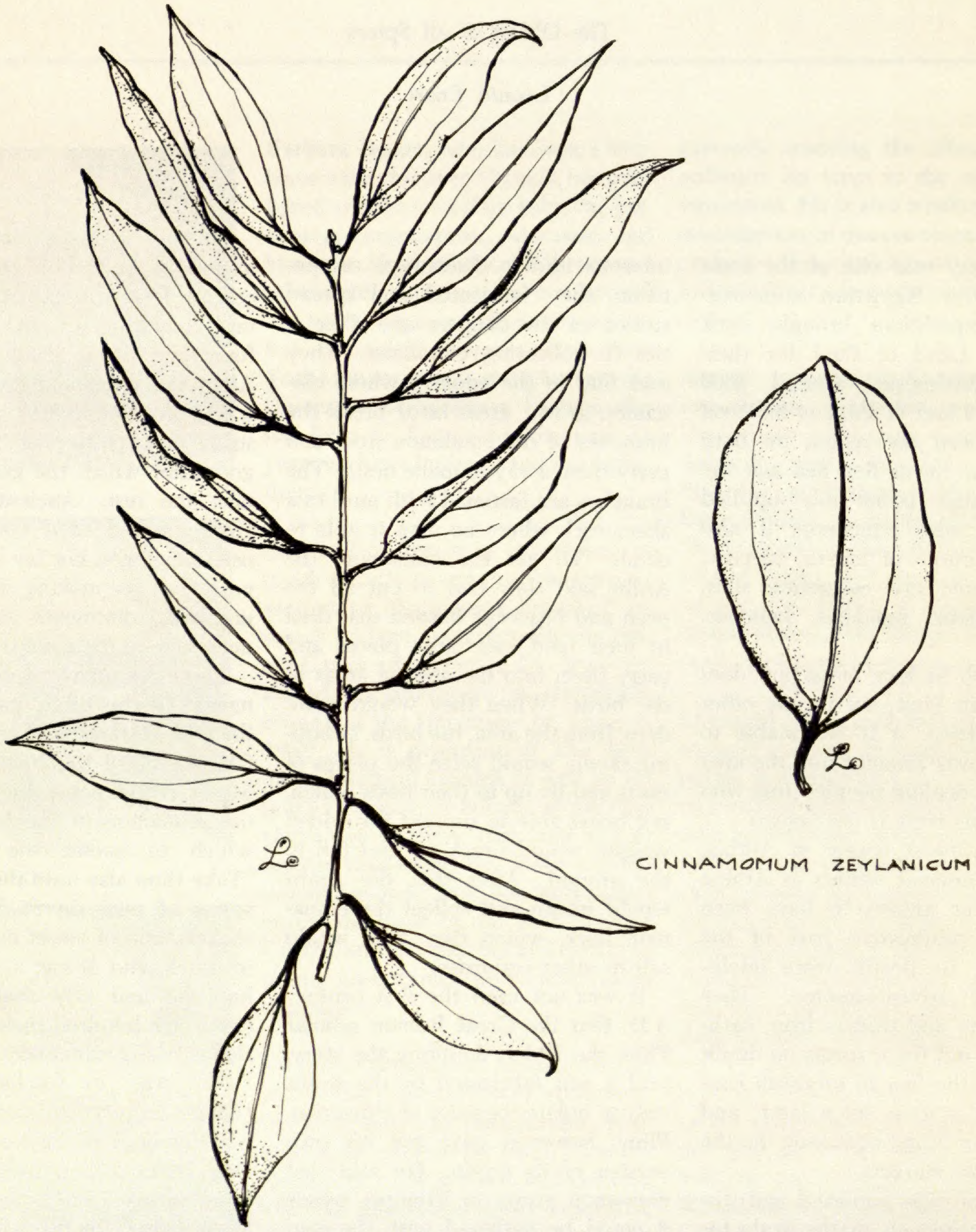
It was not until the first century A.D. that the Great Roman scholar Pliny the Elder, doubting the story, said it was fabricated by the Arabs only to inflate the price of cinnamon. Pliny, however, gave out his own version of its origin. He said that cinnamon grows in Ethiopia where it could be gathered with the consent of the god Assabinus who permitted its collection only after receiving from the gatherers an offering consisting of the entrails of forty-four oxen, goats, and rams. After the cinnamon was collected, a priest would divide the shoots and set aside a portion of them for the god, after which the gatherer could take the rest. Ancient Egyptians, Hebrews and their contemporaries used cinnamon not for culinary purposes but for making the perfumes, unguents, ointments and holy oils necessary to their way of life.

There are many references to cinnamon in the Bible, particularly in the Old Testament. For example, in Chapter 30 of the Book of Exodus, Moses is instructed by the Lord to use cinnamon in the holy oil with which to anoint the tabernacle: "Take thou also unto these principal spices of pure myrrh five hundred shekels, and of sweet cinnamon half so much, and of sweet calamus two hundred and fifty shekels, and of cassia five hundred shekels, after the shekel of the sanctuary . . ."

The true, or Ceylon, cinnamon (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum* Blume) is indigenous to Ceylon and southwest India, although it is now also found naturalized in Seychelles and Madagascar. In the wild state, cinnamon trees grow to 30 feet high.

The leaves of the Ceylon cinnamon are simple, ovate to elliptic, entire up to 4 inches wide, stalked, opposite, glabrous, leathery, and prominently three-veined from the base. They are reddish when young, turning dark green above and somewhat bluish-green beneath. The flowers are yellowish-white, small, about 1/8 of an inch in diameter, stalked, and are arranged in lax, terminal or axillary clusters. Each flower has 6 sepals (perianth segments), 9 stamens in 3 whorls, 3 staminodes and 1 pistil. The fruits are fleshy, berry-like, 1-seeded, black, ovoid and up to 4/5 of an inch long.

Under cultivation, cinnamon is grown as a coppiced bush, not higher than 6 to 8 feet. The shoots are ready for cutting 2 or 3 years after planting, and the greater part of the crop is from 2-year-old shoots. After removing the tops, side branches and leaves, two longitudinal slits are made with a sharp



knife, one on each side of the shoot, permitting removal of the bark in two strips of similar dimensions. The pieces are then put together, the outer side of one piece against the inner side of another, bundled, closely bound together, and allowed to ferment a day or so. Then, each length of bark is placed over a cylindrical stick and the outer bark removed with the aid of a curved knife. The barks are then put together as before, cut into lengths of about 12 inches and left to dry. As the bark dries, it contracts, curls inwards, and gradually acquires the form of a pipe, or quill. The bark is graded according to the thickness, appearance, color and aroma before quilling. The various grades are identified by a series of zeros and numbers as follows: "0000", "000," "00," "0," 1sts, 2nds, 3rds, and 4ths, the first mentioned grade being the finest. Broken quills are exported as "quillings" and the inner bark of twigs and twisted shoots as "featherings."

The best quality cinnamon is produced in southern Ceylon where it thrives in deep sandy soil in sheltered situations up to 2,000 ft. The average temperature in the area is about 80°F. and the average rainfall from 80 to 100 inches.

Cinnamon bark yields approximately 0.5 to 1.5 percent of an essential oil used in the flavor and perfume industry. Its chief constituent is cinnamaldehyde.

The ground bark of cinnamon has been used since antiquity as a breath sweetener, a tonic for stomach, liver, kidneys, gall and nerves, a remedy for nausea, diarrhea, and heartburn, and as a sedative for expectant mothers during childbirth. Because of these impressive qualities, cinnamon has been included in many medical preparations and patent medicines, such as laudanum, aromatic tincture of arnica, licorice water, Frescator's "Diascordium," Garus's "Elixir," Chaussier's "Antiseptic Elixir," and Todd's "potion." Some of these preparations helped the cinnamon along with a generous dose of alcohol. But modern medicine still grants some merit to cinnamon, including "no contraindications." In other words, if it does not do you any good at least it will do you no harm.

Today cinnamon is a familiar baking spice, used for flavoring cakes, breads, cookies and the like.

When we order cinnamon toast we should, to be correct, ask for "cassia toast," since cinnamon in the United States has almost entirely been replaced by cassia. The U.S. Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act. of 1938 permits the term "cinnamon" to be used not only for the true cinnamon bark (*Cinnamomum zeylanicum)* but also for the cassia bark. Cassia spice is obtained from the bark of Chinese cassia *(Cinnamomum cassia* Nees & Eberm.), Padany cassia *(C. burmanii* Blume), Saigon cassia *(C. loureiri* Nees) and probably some other species. Like the true cinnamon, they belong to the laurel family *(Lauraceae)* and should not be confused with the ornamental cassias of the pea family *(Leguminosae).*

Cassia bark resembles the true cinnamon bark but has a higher essential oil content and a more intense aroma but is not so delicately flavored. Also, ground cassia bark is reddish-brown, while ground cinnamon bark is tan in color. For flavoring food and culinary uses, cassia is just as good as genuine cinnamon. In fact, it is doubtful if one person in a thousand could distinguish one from the other although in fifteenth century England cassia was only for "commyn people" and cinnamon for "lordes."

The United States imported 4,955,000 pounds of cinnamon bark in 1974 and 11,539,000 pounds of cassia bark. However, most of this imported cinnamon is exported to Mexico.

Dr. Leonid Enari is a senior biologist on the Arboretum staff.

An Enchanted Evening

A FUND-RAISING DINNER at Descanso Gardens has been set for Friday evening, September 22. Titled "An Enchanted Evening" by its sponsors, the Southern California Camellia Council and The Descanso Gardens Guild, the benefit will raise funds for a new garden-center building at Descanso. According to Mel Gum, President of the Camellia Council, last year's event was so popular that the 500 tickets available for this season are expected to go quickly.

The "Enchanted Evening" will feature dancing under the stars in the fairylike setting of ancient oaks and candlelit tables in Descanso. The evening's menu will include a selection of fruits and salads and will feature barbecued beef as the entree. The beef will be prepared under the supervision of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens Director Francis Ching. Volunteers from the Guild and the Camellia Council will be doing the table arrangements, serving the food and hosting guests. Committee members are Tom Hughes and Judy Simmons of the Southern California Camellia Council and Nancy Dunn and Randi McDonald, officers of the Descanso Gardens Guild.

Raffle prizes announced by Tom Hughes include a 10-day cruise to the North Pacific for two valued at $2,500 and original oil paintings and water color pictures. Additional valuable prizes are anticipated by Tom who is spearheading the committee seeking raffle prizes.

The Enchanted Evening will begin at 6:00 p.m. and the charge will be $25.00 per couple with all proceeds earmarked for the building fund. For further information call 790-5414.

Bienvenidos

In their continuing effort to raise funds for the South Coast Botanic Garden buildings, the South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation is planning a gala at the garden. According to Mrs. Pat Box, vice president of the Foundation, the event is expected to be one of the most exciting social events to be held this year on the Palos Verdes Peninsula. The party, scheduled for October 7, will begin with a social hour at 6:00 p.m. in the patio of the Frances Young Hall of Horticulture. Guitar players will circulate and entertain the guests prior to dinner.

The party, titled "Bienvenidos," will have an early California theme and the dinner will feature California-style barbecued beef. The cooking of the beef will be supervised by Francis Ching, Director of the Department of Arboreta and Botanic Gardens. South Coast Foundation volunteers will assist in table decorations and food service. Pat Box, party chairman, has announced the door prize: roundtrip tickets for two to Guadalajara, courtesy of Western Airlines.

Guests are invited to wear costumes of the early California era anv may arrive on horses, buggies, or carretas to add to the evening's gaiety.

Dinner will be followed by dancing until midnight. The $25.00 per person donation for the benefit evening will be used toward the Foundation's building commitment. Attendance is limited to 400 persons so early reservations are a must. For additional information call 377-5349.

CALENDAR

September, October, November

LOS ANGELES..STATE AND COUNTY ARBORETUM, Arcadia

SEPTEMBER 23, 24 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Herb Show
Presented by Herb Society of America

SEPTEMBER 30, OCTOBER 1 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Bonsai Show
Presented by Akebono Bonsai Society

OCTOBER 1 — 2 p.m.
Sunday Afternoon Talk
Growing Bulbs in Containers
Charles Lee, horticultural information consultant

OCTOBER..15 — 10 a.m.
Sunday Morning Walk
Trees in the Historical Area
Dr. Gary Cromwell, biologist

OCTOBER 15 — 2 p.m.
Sunday Afternoon Talk
Vegetable Gardening
Ronald Call, education specialist

OCTOBER 21, 22— Sat. 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m to 5 p.m.
Iris Show
Presented by Southern California Iris Society

NOVEMBER 4, 5 —Sat. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Rose and Horticultural Show
Presented by San Gabriel Valley Rose and Horticultural Society

NOVEMBER 11, 12 — Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m-5 p.m.
Chrysanthemum Show
Presented by Pasadena Horticultural Society

NOVEMBER 18, 19 — Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m-5 p.m.
Novice Bonsai Show
Presented by Santa Anita Bonsai Society

NOVEMBER 19—2 .p.m.
Sunday Afternoon Talk
Bromeliads
Tim Lorman, horticulturist

DESCANSO GARDENS, La Canada

SEPTEMBER 2, 3 — 9 a.m. to 5 p.m.
Bonsai Show
Presented by Descanso Gardens Bonsai Society

SEPTEMBER 10 — 10 a.m.
Sunday Morning Walk
Trees of Descanso Gardens
George Lewis, superintendent

SEPTEMBER 22 — 7 p.m. to 10 p.m.
Fund-Raising Dinner
Presented by Camellia Council and Descanso Gardens Guild
For information call 790-5414

OCTOBER 28, 29 — Sat. 9 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 9 a.m.-5 p.m.
Chrysanthemum Show
Presented by Glendale Chrysanthemum Society

NOVEMBER 5 — 2 p.m.
Sunday Afternoon Talk
Grafting
George Lewis, superintendent

SOUTH COAST BOTANIC GARDEN, Palos Verdes Peninsula

SEPTEMBER 10 — 2 p.m.
Sunday Afternoon Talk
Indoor Container Gardening
Ed Hartnagel, assistant superintendent

SEPTEMBER 17 — 10 a.m.
Sunday Morning Walk
Australian Native Plants
Jeffrey Hook, education assistant

SEPTEMBER 30, OCTOBER 1 — Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Mini Rose Show
Presented by South Coast Rose Society

OCTOBER 7 — 6 p.m.
South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation Social
Presented by South Coast Botanic Garden Foundation

OCTOBER 22 — 2 p.m.
Sunday Afternoon Talk
Vegetable Gardening
Jeffrey Hook, education assistant

OCTOBER 28, 29 — Sat. 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Sun. 10 a.m.-5 p.m.
Bonsai Show
Presented by South Coast Bonsai Association

NOVEMBER 3, 4, 5 — 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. daily
African Violet Show
Presented by African Violet Council of Southern California

NOVEMBER 12 — 10 a.m.
Sunday Morning Walk
Aquatic Section
Ed Hartnagel, assistant superintendent